

School Committee Meeting Minutes  
Town Offices  
January 27, 2004

Present: Donald Parker, Chairperson  
Bob Prescott  
Gary Bourassa  
Paul Wilson (arrived at 7:00 p.m.)

Also Present: Dr. Thomas Scott, Superintendent  
Patricia Stern, Business Manager  
Mike Smith, FinCom  
Thomas Walsh, SPED director  
Sylvia Jordan, Middle School Principal  
Joe Deguglielmo, DEAC representative (arrived at 7:00 p.m.)

The meeting was called to order at 6:10 p.m.

Public Participation:

As there was no public participation the meeting moved to discuss old business.

Gary Bourassa motioned to approve the minutes of January 13, 2004. Bob Prescott seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

FY05 technology budget updates were reviewed. A question was brought up about whether the school district had to purchase Dell computers or if more generic computer could be ordered.

The committee members reviewed the second reading of the Homeless Students policy. Gary Bourassa motioned to approve the policy. Bob Prescott seconded. The motion was approved.

The contract between The Lucas Project, LLC and the Shirley School District was reviewed. The Lucas Project, LLC will be responsible for establishing a website for the district. Bob Prescott motioned to approve the contract. Gary Bourassa seconded. The motion was approved.

Payables Warrants 432 and 434 were reviewed by Patricia Stern, Business Manager. She also reviewed Payroll Warrants 327 and 827. All were approved.

Mrs. Stern notified the committee that the Center School furnace has been repaired for just under \$9000.00.

Thomas Walsh reviewed the FY05 SPED budget. Mr. Walsh stated that it is difficult to propose a budget in January when all rates are not yet set, especially with respect to out-of-district rates. FLLAC, however, has provided set figures and rates. All numbers that are not actual figures have a 5% inflation rate built in. As a result, the FY05 preliminary SPED budget is a 23.5% increase over last years SPED budget. The major increase is

due to two new students in out-of-district placements who moved into Shirley and one student who needed to be moved to a more expensive program. Gary Bourassa motioned to approve the preliminary budget. Bob Prescott seconded. The motion was approved.

The FY05 custodial/maintenance budget was tabled for the next meeting to allow the members to review the information.

Dr. Scott moved forward to discuss the District Goals mid year update.

Goal 1 Curriculum:

- MCAS prep books for writing and reading have been incorporated in grades 1-4
- Grade 2 Wilson spelling program has begun
- A K-8 writing curriculum guide was written and distributed to staff. This will assist teachers in understanding expectations for writing at the beginning, middle and end of year.
- All children in grades K-4 should be assessed in their reading skills by February vacation. Guided reading books have been ordered which will coincide with the students assessed reading level.
- The Addison Wesley Math program is being integrated into curriculums. A mid-year math assessment tool will be completed by February vacation for K-8 students.
- Teaching Assistants are being offered workshops and information in order to increase their skills as part of the NCLB act.

Goal 2 Facilities:

- Shirley Middle School handbook is in place and is being utilized fully.
- Elementary school council is meeting to establish a handbook. Eighteen elementary teachers are participating in a graduate course through Fitchburg State College to learn discipline and management issues.
- Dr. Scott and Hugh Muffoletto meet twice a month with the DEAC. The DEAC is considering different models of education. No decision has been made.

Goal 3 Climate:

- A peer mediation trainer has been hired 2 days a week. Twenty peer mediators have been identified and will receive four full days of training.
- Mentor teachers are working with newer teachers on responsive classroom approaches.
- Eighteen (18) elementary teachers are participating in graduate courses in class management.
- Small group counseling sessions with an outside agency have been established at the middle school.
- Paul Wilson arrives (7:00 p.m.).
- There has been difficulty filling the Nurse Team Leader position. As a result, the Health Curriculum has not advanced.

#### Goal 4 Community:

- The Principals have sent home weekly newsletters to parents. Mrs. Jordan also sends her newsletters via email to the committee members. Mr. Wilson states that he does not receive his email.
- Various activities have been planned that invited the public to participate: The Seniors Dinner, PTA Phoenix Dinner, and Athletic Boosters.

The members moved on to discuss the accreditation process. Dr. Scott distributed information to the members. The members felt that it would be beneficial if a representative could attend a School Committee meeting and explain everything that would be involved in the process, prior to committing to the process. Dr. Scott will contact the representative and arrange a meeting later in the school year.

Requests for home education for Sofia Rivera and Sarah Grace were reviewed. Gary Bourassa motioned to approve each request. Bob Prescott seconded both requests. The motions were approved.

Use of land on the Shirley portion of Devens was discussed next. Housing will be torn down near the school and the Board of Selectman has been meeting with MassDevelopment to determine how to use the land. Dr. Scott thought a letter should be sent to the Board of Selectman indicating that another 14 acres might be beneficial for a new school in the future. The size of the lot would include athletic fields. For the record, Gary Bourassa made his opposition to owning land in another jurisdiction known to the members. Bob Prescott motioned to approve the letter. Gary Bourassa seconded. Paul Wilson, Bob Prescott and Don Parker voted yes, Gary Bourassa voted no. The motion carries.

A question was brought up at an earlier meeting regarding the use of Center School. Dr. Scott included a memorandum to the BOS and FinCom stating how and why the Center School is utilized.

The School Choice Summary (preliminary FY04) was reviewed. This information was received from the state and Dr. Scott has notified the state of at least four (4) omissions. According to this information, 91 Shirley students attend other districts, 14 of which are high school students and 75 students attend Shirley schools from other districts. Thus, the number of students who go out and come in at the K-8 level are the same.

Information on the Youth Ventures Art Project was discussed. Thirty-one first graders attended the first after school meeting run by middle school students.

*Fine Lines*, the elementary literary magazine was a big success. The students are highly motivated to get their work published. There was some discussion to charge for the magazine, as there is a large cost associated with having it published.

The PTA fundraiser was a huge success at the Phoenix Club. The Athletic Booster club has also been very successful in purchasing uniforms for the athletes as well as in their concession stand sales.

Mr. Wilson wanted to discuss the drug situation at the middle school. Mrs. Jordan briefly gave an overview of the situation without giving away too much specific information. Mr. Wilson would like to meet with her to find out more information. In the meantime he would like to see on a future agenda what information is provided to Shirley School District students concerning drug use of any type. Dr. Scott said that it would be included on the next agenda.

Bob Prescott motioned to adjourn the meeting. Gary Bourassa seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:  
Karen Gutheil